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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
Office of Current Intelligence
15 July 1963

CURRENT INTELLIGENCE MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT: Military Junta in Ecuador

1. A military junta took over the government of Ecuador in a near-bloodless coup on 11 July. President Arosemena and Vice President Varea were both exiled.

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3. Among the first moves of the junta was the issuance of a proclamation outlawing the Communist Party of Ecuador (PCE). Orders were issued for the arrest of PCE Secretary General Pedro Saad and other high-ranking Communists. A raid on PCE headquarters netted several rank-and-file Communists, the PCE files and financial records, and two truckloads of propaganda. Saad and other PCE leaders had fled into hide-outs previously prepared. The junta also ordered the detention of all known terrorists and extremists. About 150 persons were rounded up, some of whom have already been sent to prison farms in the trans-Andean eastern provinces.

4. In a note delivered to the US Embassy on 14 July, the junta committed itself to comply with Ecuador's international treaty obligations and its obligations as a member of the Organization of American States and the United Nations. US Ambassador Bernbaum notes that the junta has met the normal requirements for recognition and has promised a return to elective constitutional government as soon as possible, in line with previous verbal assurances to the ambassador that civilian government would be restored in about one year. The ambassador comments, "I believe a return to constitutional government within a reasonable period is their sincere desire." The junta has also committed itself to unspecified measures of domestic reform.

State Dept. review completed

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5. Reactions to the junta range from enthusiastic support on the part of parties of the right and center to guarded tolerance by the moderate left. Most of the public is relieved by the easing of tension and by the ending of the uncertainty that had long existed. Business groups and the press strongly support the junta. A potential threat exists, however, from the Communists and other leftist extremists, who realize that the junta will take repressive measures against them even without provocation.

6. The extreme left probably will attempt to initiate a series of terrorist acts, after a short period of hiding, and may try to implement plans for guerrilla activities they have been preparing for two years. The armed forces and the police are capable of containing and eventually destroying guerrilla units, but will be hard put to eliminate terrorism altogether so long as terrorists are at large.

7. International reaction has been moderate so far. Cuban and Soviet propaganda broadcasts have denounced the junta. On 12 July, the Venezuelan Foreign Ministry formally suspended diplomatic relations with Ecuador, stating that the move was in keeping with the national policy of withholding recognition of any military government. Several Latin American countries indicate they will recognize the government if the junta meets the normal qualifications.

8. This paper has been coordinated with ARA and INR in the Department of State, and with DDP/WH.

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